2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

they believe in two powers, of Light and Darkness, which are in conflict—Good and Evil. These tattoos are in some way connected with it. So is the Serpent, which they sometimes tattoo and also draw on walls."

I never saw a tattooed snake, but saw some carved on tombs. Mgr. Cozzy, whose work as priest and doctor was beyond all praise, died in 1926—a loss not only to the tribesmen but to science, for his pile of MS. notes on tribal customs was destroyed in the war years, and his probably unrivalled knowledge died with him.

This belief in the powers of Light and Darkness takes us back to Mithraism and Manichæism. That all the tribes believe in this struggle I first learnt in Nikaj, when the thunder crashed on the mountains and my Nikaj guide cried: "Drangoni is fighting Kulshedra." Kulshedra is the evil female power who strives to destroy mankind with storms and floods. Drangoni is the good male power which hurls thunder and lightning and drives her back. As we have seen, the female, according to Mani, possessed but few particles of light and was an instrument of destruction.

The Manichæan belief is shown by Titus Bostrensis Episcopus, who, in *Adversos Manichæos*, tells of a Manichee "asserting strongly and wickedly alleging that the fruits of the earth are created by the sun, which he admires and honours exceedingly. He says that the overwhelming rainstorms are the defence of matter" (i.e. the wicked substance) "and work passionately against the powers of Good" (*v.* Migne, *Series Græca*, vol. xviii, p. 1195). The rain is the sweat of the evil power striving to destroy the good.

The belief in Kulshedra and Drangoni is found all through Northern and Central Albania. I do not know its southern limit. Drangoni can be a man or a male animal. If a boy is born with a feather under his armpit he will be a Drangoni; but his mother must tell no one or he will die at once. This accounts for the extremely small number of Drangonis who survive. I was told that St. George was a Drangoni, which may be the reason of his great popularity in the Balkans.

The Serb tradition that when it thunders and lightens St. Ilija is driving off the storm fiends is possibly another form of the same tale —Drangoni here taking the form of St. Ilija.

Thus deep in the mind of the peasant there lurks still a remnant of the Mithraic and Manichæan beliefs.

A point of interest about the tattoo patterns is that part of the Gruda tribe, the bulk of the Hoti, and all the Shkreli (*v.* Tribes) have a clear tradition of having migrated from places farther north to escape from the Turks. They insist that they were Catholic at the time of the ancestral migration, and may, therefore, descend from one of the northern districts of tattooed aborigines which early came under

776 beliefs and rites one can hardly doubt. As is well known, the gods of the heathens became the devils of the Christians.

776 Marko was greatly afraid of Beelzebub and mentioned him with
777 a curse and a whisper. Belial and Beelzebub were supposed to be the most active. The tribesman followed the advice of his priest and put
[304] a cross on his house and tattooed himself with a cross, but he further protected himself with more ancient signs; he planted the skulls of horses, goats, and oxen on poles round his house and fields. Some houses had rows of skulls. I wondered whether, in old days, human ones had figured there, too.

The horse-skull was most valued not only in Albania, but also in Bosnia and in Montenegro. Where civilization has penetrated the horse-skull was often replaced by a twisted petroleum tin whitewashed. Short-sighted devils, seeing it from a distance, could easily have mistaken it for the real thing and fought shy.

[793] Priests are but human. I found one Catholic priest had a whole array of horse- and other skulls round his beehives. He laughed it off when I remarked on it, and added that bees were very liable to disease. He evidently wanted to be on the safe side.

754 I often found in the mountains a distinct fear of being drawn, or "written," as they always called it. At Vraka I asked if I might draw the interior of a house. The woman was doubtful. She at last said I was not to "write" her or her children, and, to make sure, she drove the children out of the house. In Luria I was told not to "write" anyone or any house. At Lohja was a wonderful old man, who was reputed to be 110, who boasted that he had sinned but twice in his life—and then it was not his fault. Men in plenty he had killed, but never dishonourably or for money. The company suggested that I should "write" him. Much flattered, the old man sat still for a while, but when everyone shouted that the sketch was exactly like him, he became greatly alarmed, and earnestly begged me never to destroy what I had "written" about him, for at the moment it was torn he would drop down dead. I preserved the sketch, and five years later found him still going strong.

754 At Seltzi, in the Klimenti tribe, I was told the best way to detect
787 a shtriga is to keep the bones of the pig you ate on the last day of Carnival. All through the Balkans the pig, abhorred by Turk and Jew, is a sign of Christianity. On Easter Day you make a cross with the pig's bones and tie it on the church door when the church is full of people. If any shtrigas are in the church they cannot get out except carried on the shoulders of the man who made the cross. They run
754 wildly round and round and can be caught.

681 There was, so far as I could learn, no traditional punishment for a

754 was who used to do wonders. The bey thought it a good idea, and the man was fetched from his cell. He was very willing to perform, and asked only for a bowl of water. One was brought, and he made an
● [787] incantation over it. He then said that if any guest would name a place he wished to see, it could be seen in the water. Someone asked for Malta, and Malta was duly reflected; the harbour, the quay, and a steamer just getting up steam. When it had been admired, the magician asked the bey: "Have I your permission, noble Bey, to go off in that steamer?"

"Certainly," said the bey.

The magician lifted his foot and put it on the steamer in the water-bowl, and immediately went off in that steamer and was never heard of again. No one but myself could see anything improbable in this amazing tale; with Beelzebub all things are possible.

2. The Evil Eye

754 The Evil Eye was rampant. At Vukli an unhappy woman told me
761 it had killed all her eight children. A man there, to prove the power of his eye, had stared at a bunch of grapes, which had withered under his gaze and fallen to the ground before the awe-struck spectators. I did not meet this man.

754 Marko had a milch ewe he greatly valued. One day a mountain woman came to the door begging. He gave her bread, but she was not satisfied, and as she left she looked at the poor beast, which was perfectly well, and said: "What a fine ewe!" Soon afterwards it began to sicken. Marko sent for the vet., who said at once: "I can do nothing—someone has looked at this ewe. You must find her and make her remove the spell." She could not be found and the ewe died. Marko cut her up for mutton. I expressed horror. "The meat," said he, "is beautiful. There was nothing the matter with the ewe except a lot of yellow spots in its liver, made by that woman."

754 *Protection against Evil Eye.*—Many amulets are worn. Most horses
777 and many cattle wear blue beads (sham turquoise), tufts of badger-hair, which is said to be very efficacious, or triangular leather cases containing inscriptions. A universal protection, as in many other parts of the world, is a horn or horns. Though the horse-skull is now popular to guard fields and houses, the original skull was probably a horned one, e.g. the familiar ox-skull carved on the frieze of many a classical and pseudo-classical building. A pair of boar's tusks, mounted as a crescent and hung round the neck, is a favourite amulet for a handsome
[776] saddle-horse. It prevents evil spirits riding the horse at night and

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

to find it; only the tortoise knows where it grows. You must, therefore, search for a tortoise's eggs and, having found some, build a little stone wall round them. Then you wait till the mother tortoise comes to see how her eggs are getting on. When she sees the wall, she is very angry, for she knows the little ones will not be able to climb out and so will starve. She butts the wall with her head and pulls it with her paws, and when she finds her efforts are vain, off she goes to find the plant. Presently she comes back with a leaf in her mouth, touches the wall, and down it goes. You then know it is the right plant and you take the leaf from her. Sometimes hobbled horses, grazing on the mountain, touch this plant with their hobbles, which at once break and the horse runs away. It might, of course, be the work of horse-stealers, but undoubtedly sometimes it is the plant. I heard this tortoise tale in many places, for tortoises are very common. Many people knew someone who had successfully tried the above plan—but I never met the man who had done so.

In all these tales of magic and witchcraft it is clear that the beliefs and usages of a remote past have survived. Magic played a great part of old in the Balkans. Thessaly was notorious for its witchcraft.

One tide of invasion after another swept the Balkans. The Romans brought new gods and then came Christianity; and while Christianity struggled for a firm footing, Mithraism wrestled with and almost overthrew it. The inrush of pagan Slavs trampled on old and new alike, and before a new order of things was evolved and established came the Turk with yet other beliefs and usages. As each high-tide subsided the points of the prehistoric rock-bottom have shown above the surface. Each tide in ebbing has left debris; but not one has as yet entirely overwhelmed that rock-bottom.

4. Some Balkan Remedies. Medicine and Surgery in Albania

Magic and disease are so closely connected, that magic and medicine are naturally intertwined also. Nevertheless, remedies other than spells are made use of.

These are largely herbal. Both in Albania and Montenegro one hears often: "Every herb has its disease; every disease has its herb." The sick Albanian peasant always asked me for a "bar" (herb), and the Montenegrin for "trava" (grass or herb).

Among the Albanian tribes were local doctors famed for medicinal lore inherited from their ancestors (carefully guarded secrets); and in all Balkan lands knowledge of herbs is boasted of by many an old woman.

In Albania the word used for doctor was always "hekim." This

Magic, Medicine, Soothsaying

The favourite remedy in Scutari for the pulmonary form was a drink made of the root of "bader" (*Iris Dalmatica*), which grows wild plentifully. It soothed the throat and allayed coughing somewhat. 757 278

Diarrhœa.—A decoction of oak bark—a strong astringent—was efficacious.

Constipation.—There was no local remedy. It was a very common trouble and I was constantly asked for "English salts."

Opium "tea," made by boiling haphazard a handful of poppy-seed, was given recklessly to stop pain. It was common to give a small dose nightly to infants to keep them quiet. In a communal house, where some twenty people sleep together, a crying child is not tolerated. Children suffering from opium poisoning were often brought to the Austrian hospital, the mother being quite unaware of the cause of the child's state.

Animal Remedies.—When I was suffering from acute sciatica, was paralysed with pain, and quite helpless, Marko wanted to slaughter a sheep in the yard and wrap me in the raw hide. As is customary when people are ill, all the neighbours crowded into my room to cheer me. When I was on the point of collapse with pain and heat, the cat jumped on to my bad leg, hurting me horribly. The neighbours chorused: "Thank God! The cat has jumped on her. Now she will not die. The cat always knows." [755 758] [787]

Then the Austrian doctor carried me off to his hospital.

The reason given for the raw hide is that the sheep eats many herbs and their virtue will soak into the patient. But in fact the raw hide is a hot fomentation. Other beasts are used.

This same Austrian doctor told me he was called to a moribund man. The hut was crowded, it was midsummer, and the heat and stench indescribable. Ten days before, a black cat had been split and applied to the patient's abdomen and was still there.

Enteric Fever.—This is endemic all through the Balkans. In Albania a horrid remedy was believed in. The dung of a dog which had been dropped on a stone and dried in the sun was pounded and given in water. I vainly tried to prevent this on one occasion; but the dose had been prepared by the local priest, who had the greatest faith in it. This repulsive remedy was included in the official pharmacopœia of Vienna till 1795, to be used internally for dysentery and griping pains. In Albania, at any rate, patients survived the treatment. Did the dog's dung supply an intestinal bacillus which combated that of enteric?

Emetic.—Human excrement mixed with water was given. Mixed with rakia it was given to an habitual drunkard with the idea of curing him. The experiment failed.

The boiled flesh of the glass snake (*Pseudopus pallasi*), a common

● 787 During that war I again heard the bones fatally read. An Albanian friend of mine in Podgoritza, owner of the local omnibus, was a great student of bones. He spent his leisure reading them as we others do books. One day he begged me to come for something very important, for my eye and ear alone.

The windows of his little room were closely curtained to prevent spying, and in the half-darkness was a pile of bladebones. He chose one and showed me a white opaque spot on it as large as a sixpence, and gravely asked if I knew what it meant. Now an opaque spot in certain places means death. "Yes," said he, "but what a spot! Did you ever see such a large one?" I never had, nor had he. He was troubled and anxious and pondered and pondered. The position of the spot meant someone must die soon. But it was so large, it must mean a great man. "Could it mean anything less than a king?" That was what he wished to ask me.

There flashed through my brain: "Are they plotting to assassinate King Nikola?" (He was very unpopular, for the war was going badly for Montenegro.) I discreetly said: "I do not know." He decided that it must mean a king—and shortly.

Just about a fortnight afterwards King George of Greece was assassinated. It was quite impossible that the seer should have known of any plot. We had hardly any news from other fronts.

It was one of those coincidences which, in the popular mind, overwhelm a thousand previous failures and annihilate reason. My poor friend was awestruck at the revelation that had been granted him.

648 The last time I heard, and probably ever shall hear, the bones read was
721 at Durazzo, when the Prince zu Wied was there, in the fatal summer of 1914. Durazzo was seething with representatives of every Power that had a finger in the Balkan pie. France, Russia, and Serbia were doing all they could to start a war. Italy was active. Fighting was going on and the hospitals were full of wounded. On the quay a very ragged mountain man insisted on speaking with "the Kralitza" as they
787 called me. He had come a long distance to consult me. He was eager and excited. Pulling a fowl's breast-bone from his sash, he held it against the blazing sun. The bone glowed red. The others said he was stupid and did not know how to read the bones. But he insisted and cried vehemently: "Gjak! gjak (blood, blood) everywhere, everywhere nothing but blood and more blood." And about a week or two afterwards the Great War began, and blood has not yet ceased flowing in the Near East.

Enough examples. That very many people believe the bones is undoubtable. I have been at meals where elder men have stopped

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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484 562 777 789 small objects, which they themselves have worn, as talismans to ensure their safe return, and during their often protracted absences they resort to various 787 methods of divination, either with or without the aid of a professional wise woman, in order to discover how their beloved spouses fare, where they sojourn, and how they are occupied.

152 593 The men on their side are not free from home-sickness, and many are the pathetic little exile-songs, in which their longings for their native mountains, and for the beloved ones from whom they are, for a time, separated, find expression. One may serve as a specimen:

[539]

Now in Bender, now in Buda,
Bide we lone and desolate.
Patience, heart! What boots complaining,
So it hath been willed by Fate.

Yet this grievous bitter exile
Cannot longer still be borne;
Is't naught that we like felons wander
From Fatherland as outlaws lorn?

Who the exile's griefs can number?
Say whose woes can equal mine?
E'en the viper, should she sting me,
Poisoned by my blood would pine!

527 535 The amusements of the Albanian women are, for the most part, limited to birth and wedding festivities, at which singing and dancing are the principal features. Albanian dances are of two kinds: the Pyrrhic, as it is called by travellers, which is usually indulged in by the men, and a kind of "kerchief dance," which is affected by the women, the two sexes always performing separately. The women dance in couples,

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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776 appointed time, he never fails to bring it permanently to the surface.

776 A story is told of a shepherd who, when pasturing
825 his sheep in Dibra, saw one day a snake curled up asleep on a great heap of gold. In order to induce him to leave it, the shepherd fetched a pail of milk, which he placed near the snake, and then retired to a little distance to watch his movements. As he had calculated, the snake gorged himself with the milk, and then returned to sleep on the gold heap. But the quantity of milk he had drunk made him thirsty and uneasy, and he wriggled and wriggled and could not rest. Finally he went off to get some water, and, the spring being at some distance, before he returned the shepherd had removed the whole of the treasure to a place of safety. What the snake did when he came back and found his property gone, the story omits to mention.

776 The Tosks hold that hidden treasures are guarded by fire-breathing winged snakes with human faces. These creatures they, however, call by the Greek name of Stoichiò (στοιχιὸ), which signifies generally an elemental spirit. On the eve of Sunday the Stoichiò relaxes its vigilance, and the treasure may then be seized by a bold and enterprising individual.

●787 The existence of a treasure, and the spot where it is to be found, are held to be frequently revealed in dreams, which are repeated on three consecutive nights. As in the above-mentioned case, should the fortunate person take another into his confidence, the gold turns to charcoal and his days are numbered. The Albanian women, however, who are learned in the expounding of dreams, say that, as a rule, they go by contraries.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

leave of him, he returns the earrings. It is considered a bad omen for the journey if the traveller should for any reason turn or look back. If he have left anything behind, he sends another to fetch it; and should a friend or stranger call to him from behind, he will not turn back to meet him, but remain standing where he is until the other comes up, a practice which foreigners, not understanding the reason for it, have put down to discourtesy. If on the road the traveller meets a fox, or a flock of sheep, he considers it a good augury; a flock of goats, however, or a hare crossing the road, is held to signify ill luck.

Travellers in Upper Albania may frequently see stones placed in the forks or hollows of roadside trees. According to M. Hecquard,[1] this practice originates in the belief that the stones serve as resting-places for the feet of those unhappy beings for whom the rites of sepulture have not been properly performed, and who, while wandering in mid-air, can alight upon them as on the solid earth. To place a stone on a tree is also said in some mysterious way to diminish the fatigue of the pedestrian, and help him on his journey.

Omens and auguries, too, both good and evil, are drawn from all the trifling occurrences of every-day life, as well as from the observation of the phenomena of Nature, besides being sought for in the bones and entrails of slaughtered sheep and in the flight of birds. Among the omens read in the actions of the domestic animals are the following. When introducing a newly purchased cow into the farmyard, some object, made of iron or silver, is placed across the gateway

[1] *La Haute Albanie.*

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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through which the animal is led. If the cow steps over the object with the right hoof, it is considered a good augury; if with the left, the omen is unfavourable. If a hen shakes her feathers in the house, or if one of her feathers hangs askew without falling, it foretells the arrival of a friend, or the receipt of news from an absent relative. Should the hen crow like a cock without turning its head to the East, it signifies a death or other serious misfortune. If, during the night, a cock crows at an unusual hour, it is either a sign of a change in the weather, or that important news will arrive in the morning. To an expectant mother, however, it announces that her child will be a boy. Should the dog howl while looking away from the dwelling, it is a sign of death; and if the cat mews repeatedly, that a member of the family will shortly fall ill. If, however, she licks herself frequently, it is merely a sign of rain.

Cats, I may here remark, are treated with great kindness by the Albanians, who, it is said, are not in the habit of laying to their charge the smashing of crockery, or the disappearance of provisions. According to a myth current among the Albanian highlanders, the cat was created by Jesus, who produced one from the sleeve of His mantle when dining in a house infested with mice. To kill a cat is consequently considered a most reprehensible action. When such a family pet dies, the children of the house call in their friends to assist in pussy's obsequies, and, after she has been carried in solemn procession to the grave, the little party sit down to a funeral feast, for which the mother willingly furnishes the necessary viands.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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787 825 The cries of wild beasts and birds, and also the circumstances under which they are heard, or the animals themselves met with, have also their signification. If wolves howl in packs, it betokens, in some districts, a death; in others, severe frost. To meet a snake before sunrise, or about sunset, augurs the death of a relative. If the turtle-dove, which in Middle Albania builds in the towns and villages, sits on a roof and coos, it announces to the inmates the return of a relative from a foreign land. When a cuckoo, however, sits there and sings, or an owl hoots there, it betokens a death in the house. The croak of a raven in the vicinity of a house, or the hoot of an owl, announces to the expectant mother the birth of a girl. Sparrows flying in large flocks are held to be a sign of severe cold.

787 Various auguries are also drawn from the arrival in spring of the birds of passage, and the circumstances under which they are first seen. For instance, to see the first swallow or turtle-dove before breaking one's fast in the morning portends sickness. Accordingly, about the time when these birds are expected, and more particularly on the 1st of May, the precaution [751 777] is taken of placing by the bedside a small piece of bread, which is eaten immediately on awakening in order to avoid any such risk. In Northern Albania, on the contrary, it is held that to see while fasting the 755 first swallow brings luck. Here, too, when a mother, whose child has been born with a running sore, sees the first stork, she places on her baby's head a stone, saying:

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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Head thy poultice,
Head this stone.[1]

787

A few of the trifling occurrences of every-day life to which a superstitious significance is attached by the Albanians have their parallels in our own country. We say, for instance, when seized by a sudden shiver, "Some one is walking over my grave;" while an Albanian says, "Death is calling me," and mentally replies, "I am not yet ready." When attacked with a fit of hiccough, the Albanian believes that some friend is speaking of him, and calls over the names of all his relatives and acquaintances, in the belief that the one he mentions with the last hiccough will be the one who has uttered his name. If the eye itches, it denotes coming rain; if the right hand, vexation consequent on being called upon to pay money; if the left, the receipt of money; itching of the lips signifies the arrival of a friend or relative; of the nose, strife and discord. Humming in the right ear is looked upon as a good omen, and in the left the reverse. If a little child drops asleep just before a meal, the incident is regarded as most propitious for the whole household.

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In addition to the every-day observances with respect to auspicious and inauspicious actions and events, so many are attached to certain seasons and days of the year as to form quite a Calendar of Superstitions. Some tribes, the Ritza, for example, celebrate their New Year's Day on the 1st of September, and every

[1] Κρυε την πιδελ,
κρυε την γδορ.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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December the housewife makes, besides other sweet cakes, some in the shape of rings, which are called *Koléndhra*. The one first made is termed "the cake of the oxen," and is hung up on the wall "for luck," and left there until the farmer goes out with his team to the fields. On this occasion the cake is taken down and broken to pieces on the head of one of the yoked oxen, and then divided between the pair.

Fire-ceremonies play a great part in the Christmas observances of the Albanian highlanders. As may have already been remarked in connection with birth-ceremonies, a protective and salutary character appears to attach to the fire on the hearth, and not only on such occasions, but on the eve of every important festival, the Albanian peasants light fires and keep them burning until sunset on the following day, even in summer; and from the crackling, or exploding, noises emitted by the wood in burning, they learn when the enemies of their house are conspiring against them, and whether the flocks will thrive, or the contrary. On ordinary occasions they consider it inauspicious when the thick end of a log burns before the thin, and are careful not to place one log across another. On Christmas Eve, however, all such precautions are considered unnecessary. The fire is piled up as high as the safety of the house will permit, as this is supposed to neutralise all evil effects of the non-observance of the foregoing precautions during the coming year. The largest log that can be found is brought home at sunset, when all the family, who are reunited for the festival, rise to greet it with the words, "Welcome, our log! God has destined thee for the fire! Bring

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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789 372 good luck to us and to our flocks!" Before the family sit down to supper a small quantity of food from every dish on the table is placed upon the burning log. Some branches of a cherry tree are also put on the fire, and, when partially burnt, are taken off again and kept.

857 533 Soon after midnight, the boys, in companies of from ten to fifteen, go singing from house to house, and receive, in reward for their carols, a ring-cake from each housewife.

527 789 787 [372] On the Eve of St. Basil (January 1) the fire is also kept burning all night, and the half-burnt cherry branches are again thrown on and withdrawn, to be wholly consumed on the Eve of the Epiphany, when the ashes are collected and strewn in the vineyard. The fire of St. Basil's Eve is often watched by an expectant mother, who thus hopes to ensure an easy confinement. In the morning people wash themselves and their children with "unspoken-over" water, and draw omens from the character, gay or sad, of the person who first enters the house. A cock is also sacrificed, for it is auspicious to spill blood in the house on St. Basil's Day.

789 [787] On the Eve of Epiphany the fire is also kept alight all night, and in the morning the character of the coming seasons is prophesied from the set of the wind. If a south wind blows, it indicates a full harvest and sickness; if the wind is from the east, a scanty harvest and a healthy year are predicted; if from the north, a late spring. The Christians, on the Feast of Epiphany, sprinkle their vineyards with holy water, in the hope of ensuring a plentiful crop of

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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grapes. They also place at the four corners of each plot four vine stems tied together with straw bands, and under them a piece of a cake called a *kophtopite*, made specially for the purpose, wine being one of its ingredients. A round loaf is rolled from the gate to the middle of the vineyard, and then distributed to the ravens, crows, and other birds which damage the grapes, with this invitation, "Assemble, O crows and ravens, so that we may eat and drink, and that you may do us no more harm!"

On the 1st of February, St. Tryphon's Day, it is considered lucky to work in the fields, but not in the vineyards. On the 2nd, the "Feast of the Purification," all kinds of small pulse and cereals are cooked together in a pot, and this mess, called *karkasina*, forms the staple food of the day. On the eve of the 1st of March, a kind of divination is performed by throwing into the fire a particular kind of leaf and pronouncing at the same time the name of a member of the family. If the leaf makes an explosive noise while burning, it is held to be a good omen for the person indicated, but if it burns quietly, the reverse.[1] On this vigil a clod of earth, on which a few drops of wolf's milk have been sprinkled, is thrown against the door in order that the cows and goats may milk well. In the morning the cattle are whipped with cherry branches, in order that they may enjoy good health, and people wash themselves with wine with a view to preserving themselves from vermin during the summer. As an additional precaution, they also catch a flea, which they impale on the point of a new

[1] The ancient φυλλομαντεία.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE HOUSE OF PADRE MARJAN—LULASH GIVES A WORD OF HONOR AND DISCUSSES MARRIAGE—THE STOLEN DAUGHTER OF SHALA.

PADRE MARJAN sat with us, but did not eat, as it was a fast day. An apparently endless succession of dishes—soup, lamb, omelettes, pork chops, chicken—was brought in by Cheremi and served by Rexh in his red fez. Poor little Rexh! He ate nothing but a bit of corn bread; he said the pork chops had been broiled in the fireplace, and he feared that some of the fat had spattered into the cooking pots. He was not sure, but he feared so, and he thought it safer not to eat anything prepared in them.

The lamb's head, skinned but otherwise intact, was served separately, boiled, and the delicacy of the meal was its brains, which we got at by cutting through the skull. When the chicken came, Cheremi presented it with awe in his eyes, and after we had eaten he whispered behind his hand to Perolli. In the kitchen, he said, they were talking of the chicken; it was not of Padre Marjan's raising, but it had been hatched and brought up in the village, and they were sure that its breastbone would foretell the immediate future of Thethis. Would we let him have it?

PEAKS OF SHALA

● 787 Perolli took up the thin bone and very carefully cleaned it of every clinging bit of flesh. Then, with an apology to Padre Marjan, he held it up to the light from the window. Through the translucent bone the marrow, clouded with clotted blood, showed clearly, and Perolli read it with serious eyes, pointing out to us its meaning. There was a clot that meant a battle, a battle to the north, and there was a widening red line running from a dark spot; the signs were clear. The government would grow more powerful, and there would be war to the north, war with the Serbs.

He gave the bone to Cheremi, who tiptoed toward the kitchen with it. I strained my ears to hear how it was received; I thought that the portent of strong government might make the people think it unwise to hand Perolli over to the Serbs; they must know that in any case his death would be avenged by soldiers from Tirana. But would it, since he was traveling "on a vacation"? Governments do not usually back up their secret-service men who fail on the job. There was no sound from the kitchen, and we entertained Padre Marjan by showing him how, in America, we use the wishbone to foretell a part of the future. But any wishbone will do that for us, while in Albania only the breastbone of a hen that has lived all her life in the family will foretell that family's future.

000 Outside, it continued to rain, if that state of the air when it is surely half water can be called

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771 Thus their practices and beliefs included: building sacrifices,
[782] which at one point were most probably human sacrifices; the faith
[769] in the existence of certain snakes that guarded treasures and in the tutelary spirits of people; exposing the dead after the manner of the Parsi, as a result of that lack of respect for the corpse which springs from the knowldege of the eternity of the spirit--the ancient Thracians were jubilant whenever someone died, and they wailed when some-
[775] one was born--; werewolf conceptions; separation of the soul in sleep; wandering about of the dead, especially of evil people who in the form of a ghost or in a transformed human shape cause harm. The foreseeing of the future makes use of materialistic means in order to survive before the masses in a degenerate age which no longer knows
• [787] or believes. It prophesies from the fissures that appear in a heated sheep's shoulder blade or hen's breast bone; also from the bright and dark spots in the light filtering through, or from the flight of birds.
[789] The old knowledge of the emanating, radiating spiritual forces of beings and things is used for magical purposes, for instance little pieces of paper that have something written on them and which are worn as a protection or drunk after they have been dissolved in water. The sun still lives among the Albanians as "God's reflection."

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Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

Y 775 761 Several local Austrian governors told me that in the early years of the Austrian occupation the burning of lampirs' bodies was frequent. The Government forbade and suppressed the practice and caused much discontent. A recent case (told me in 1906) was caused by an outbreak of enteric at Vlasenitza. A young man died. His wife sickened and vowed that her husband had returned at night and sucked her blood. The terrified villagers wanted to dig up and burn his body. The authorities forbade it. The lampir was then seen and heard by many persons whose blood he sucked. Fifteen persons died. It would be interesting to know how many died of enteric, and how many because A they believed they were doomed to die by the lampir.

CM 761 The peasants all through Albania and Macedonia I found to be extraordinarily affected mentally if convinced they must die. They would then make no effort to live, but simply "lie down and die."

A 761 ●787 In Albania I heard of several cases in which a man's death being foretold by "reading it in a bone," he proceeded forthwith to sicken and die; and there seemed no reason to doubt the truth of this.

I have often seen a patient refuse all food under the belief that he would die in a week, and have resuscitated many who were very far gone by forcibly pouring egg and brandy into them. The result of the pick-me-up was sometimes comically quick. After an hour the patient would ask for another and decide to live. Without it he would certainly have died, as all the family continually said: "You are dying," A and did not try to make him eat.

761 775 Belief in the fatal visit of a lampir has, no doubt, caused death.

Since the civilizing power of Austria has been removed a fresh instance of corpse-burning has been reported from Bosnia.

M 776 [177] *Vilas.*—Last but not least the "vila," a female spirit which haunts the mountains, is very capricious, and works much evil as well as some good. In Montenegro I was told vilas used to be plentiful, but had been driven away by the advent of artillery. Maybe some still haunted the deep limestone caverns.

M [761] Of old, vilas sometimes swore sisterhood with mortals, and even married them. But they were excessively jealous, and when a handsome youth wished to marry they were apt to kill the bride.

Krsto told me a tale "that happened a long time ago in Montenegro." A vila disguised herself as a beautiful maiden and caused two brothers to fall in love with her. She urged them to fight each other and promised herself to the conqueror. They fought and one was killed. The vila M then laughed and flew away. The unhappy survivor killed himself.

Y 776 787 I asked how, as both were dead, it was known that the vila had caused the trouble. Krsto merely replied it was a fact well known to all.

But the sympathies of the vilas were Slavonic, for till recent times

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they warned both Serbs and Montenegrins of the approach of the Turks, and saved Serb heroes by covering them with mist and hiding them from the foe.

Some examples from the ballads show the character of vilas in "pre-artillery" days (Karadjitch Collection, vol. ii, No. 37). Marko Kralyevitch and Voyvoda Milosh ride over the mountains. Marko asks Milosh to sing to him. Milosh replies that last night he drank wine with the Vila Ravijojla and she forbade him to sing. Urged by Marko, Milosh sang. The vila tried to out-sing him, but Milosh had the finer voice, so the infuriated vila shot him in the throat with an arrow and he was like to die. Marko pursued her furiously on his horse, Sharatz. The vila flew up into the air. Marko hurled his war-club and brought her down, and threatened to smash her if she would not cure Milosh.

The vila then called on him for sisterhood in the name of God and St. John, and promised to cure Milosh if he released her. He did so; she gathered herbs and made Milosh far stronger than before. The ballad ends by her advising the other vilas not to shoot at heroes when Marko is about. On several occasions afterwards she helps her "pobratim," Marko. The mediæval ballad-maker has depicted a wine-swilling, revengeful, and murderous fairy who suits her savage environment.

Jealousy and cruelty are seen in the *Death of the two Dragitchitches* (*op. cit.*, vol. i). Dragitch is about to celebrate a great festival. He is giving his daughter in marriage and marrying his two sons. His wife dreams that two ravens, with their wings bloody to the root, bring a black letter in their claws. She prays her husband to be satisfied with marrying their daughter and to put off the sons' wedding for a week. He refuses, and the train of groomsmen and the two bridegrooms ride off on fine horses. But the vilas watch them unseen and from behind the trees shoot their arrows. At midday a halt is called, and then only are the two young men missed. The father remembers the dream, and goes in search of them in fear: "By the side of the path he found his two sons. The accursed vilas had shot them. Dragitch cried out as doth a fierce serpent . . . then he drew his bright sword and cut off his sons' heads and put them in his saddle-bags. And he moved their bodies from the blood-stained path and covered them with leaves, saying: 'Farewell, my two sons, this day have I wedded ye.' " He carries home the heads, and tells his wife that he has brought her two golden apples as a gift. And the cursed vilas thank God (an odd thing for them to do) for the woe they have caused.

The phrase "beautiful as a vila" is in constant use in Montenegro, and in recent ballads the vila still warns Montenegro against invasion.

I once rode up-country on a handsome white stallion, which belonged

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to my faithful Albanian horseboy, Shan, who had lived all his life in Montenegro. The horse was turned out to graze at night. Next morning, before mounting, I began to comb out its tangled mane with my fingers. Shan anxiously begged me not to. The vilas, he said, had been making love to it all night because it was a beauty. It had been covered with sweat. If I untied the knots the vilas had made we should have an accident. Shan, being an Albanian, probably meant the "ore" when he said "vila." I heard of no other case of a vila acting thus. But the ore are notorious for such conduct.

A M 777 773 887 *Hidden Treasure.*—As in Albania, so all through Montenegro and the Herzegovina, and probably in other Balkan lands, it is believed that mighty treasures lie hidden. The treasure of the Royal Nemanjas has yet to be found, and that of Voyvoda Momchilo at Pirlitor.

Opinions differ as to the best means of treasure-hunting. The most certain thing is when the site of the treasure is revealed in a dream; you are then sure to find it. If a steer that is perfectly black stands still on a spot, bellows, and butts his horns into the ground, there is almost surely treasure beneath. But there must not be a single white hair on the steer. If when the third cock crows in the morning a number are seen gathered together holding council, there is surely treasure beneath the spot.

Vuk Vrchevitch gives a good account of treasure-seeking in the Herzegovina. A certain man dreamed of hidden treasure. Early before the sun rose he went with some of his brethren in search of it, and took with him a black cock and a black wether. Arrived at the spot, he killed the wether and made a circle of blood round the site. They began to dig, and after a while reached a slab of stone. On this the black cock was sacrificed. They were now so near success that one of the brethren cried aloud: "God help us now and for ever." But God's name must not be invoked in aid of magic. When they raised the slab they found, indeed, a stone box—but the treasure had been turned to ashes.

Some poisoned water should be carried when treasure-hunting to kill the serpent which often guards it.

If a black stallion is led to the spot where treasure is suspected to lie and refuses to walk over it, it shows treasure is, or was, there. The foundation for these tales is the large number of Roman and prehistoric graves that have been opened. The ashes and fragments of iron and bronze found in them were ascribed to the fact that a wrong spell had been used and the treasure transmuted to something valueless —in the eyes of the searchers.

A 777 787 *A Magic Plant.*—In Albania I was told there grows a most valuable plant. Any stone or iron touched by a leaf of it at once falls to pieces. To persons thievishly inclined it is extremely useful. The difficulty is

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Monastery, I saw three. They stood with their hands on their knees and their heads thrust under the desk from which the pope was to read the Lessons. The desk being draped, their heads were hidden and their hind-quarters protruded grotesquely. If they could refrain from crowing during the reading of the Lessons they would be cured. The cure failed. Hardly had the pope begun to read when a hideous and unearthly din arose beneath his desk. No one intervened; no one even smiled. The pope read steadily, though his voice was drowned by the noise. At the end the three were led away—uncured. But I was told that as a rule the cure is successful. It may well be, for the Balkan peasant is very much affected by suggestion. He pines if he believes he has been cursed; he dies if he believes his death is "egil" (written in the Book of Fate). I did not see or hear of a case of crowing hysteria in Albania.

In Montenegro I was told a remedy for fever. It was to make fire with a fire-drill of wood. The patient helped to work the drill. The fire went out of him and into the wood and he was cured. Perhaps the exertion of drilling produced sweat and so relieved the patient. Krsto believed greatly in this cure.

6. Soothsaying

For some inscrutable reason man in many lands has thought his gods were likely to choose the insides of animals as a means for revealing the future.

"Plucking the entrails of an offering forth, they could not find a heart within the beast." So the augurs warned Cæsar to beware the ides of March. Balkan folk still find their fate written in the bones of certain animals.

I first saw the bones read at Selchan, a village in the Spata mountains, near Elbasan. It was in those days a very remote spot, and a Russian Consul was the only foreigner who had visited it within memory. Most of the male population were "wanted" by the Turkish Government. But for the purpose of my visit the friendly Albanian Mutasarif of Elbasan arranged a truce. We were halted outside the village for a parley, and also to give time to all the men of military age (whom the Government was trying to conscript for the Army) to hide in the bushes. I was then received with great joy, and even greater hospitality. The ancient headman, Constantine Suliman, a fine figure in a white fustanella, swore friendship, and hustled the women to spread a noble banquet of roast lamb, stewed fowl, cheese, milk, and maize-bread.

The district had neither church nor mosque. Every inhabitant had

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Every inhabitant had two names: a Christian name, under cover of which he refused military service; and a Moslem one, under which he refused to pay poll-tax. Constantine Suliman declared the plan worked admirably, and his tribe was practically independent. Pressed by my Christian interpreter, who was grieved at the absence of any religion, our host said that when a priest occasionally visited the place he was allowed to baptize all children that had meanwhile been born. A 553 702 651 A 852 771

It was a fit spot for seeing, for the first time, the soothsaying of ancient days. A 574

The two armed men sent with me as escort gorged the meal, and grinned affably at the heads of tribesmen which now and then bobbed up from behind bushes to peep at us.

Then Constantine Suliman picked up the fowl's breast-bone and held it against the sun. He carefully traced all the lines made by the marrow, and said gravely: "One of us five will die within a fortnight." All took it very seriously, except my interpreter, who was an employé of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and said it was very wrong to read bones, but was uneasy. He and I survived the fortnight. I have always hoped that Constantine Suliman was not the one—if any—who was shot. I saw him last, against the sky, waving dignified farewells to us, and remember him as the man who had lived eighty years and never seen peace, but had kept his honour clean according to his lights—and which of us can say more? A 787

All through the North Albanian mountains I found the reading of bones common and greatly believed in. In times of danger and political tension the primitive rite in wild surroundings was sometimes strangely dramatic.

In Montenegro, too, the custom was common. I saw the bones read there in October 1912, just before Montenegro declared war and set the war-ball rolling which has not yet quite stopped. Battalions of up-country Montenegrins were pouring into Podgoritza and camping near the barracks. I wandered among them. An old man a-squat on the ground with some comrades was hungrily devouring some food they had brought with them. He raised a well-picked mutton bladebone against the autumn sun and stared and stared. I waited, and he cried out despairingly. His comrades jeered. But the old man turned to me and said: "I see blood everywhere—much blood." The younger men said it must be Turkish blood and were cheerful. But the old grey-head had seen war before they were born and was uncomforted. Sadly he told me he feared it meant evil, and I left him staring into the bone in vain search of hope. He read, indeed, but too truly. The war of 1912, into which Montenegro rushed with such hope of greatness and glory, was the beginning of the end of Montenegro. M 787 M 781

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the younger from looking at the bones because we were all happy, so "why pry into unknown evils?"

It is not easy to say how the bones are read. Bone-readers will not tell their lore. I have pieced together the facts I gathered. The bone must be the breast-bone of a fowl (Fig. 20), or the blade-bone of a sheep or goat —no others serve. In Albania I found the fowl's bone most generally used, and in Montenegro the sheep's blade-bone. In both lands the fowl or sheep must have been bred by the house of the reader; otherwise, though it can tell of foreign affairs, it knows nothing of the fate of the house. The best fowl is a cock which is black without a white feather. It must be decapitated. If the neck were wrung the blood would all go wrong and the marks be useless.

This is the Albanian reading of the breast-bone: A good seer can tell at once if the fowl has been bought or bred. The keel is the part used. In the thickness of the neck-end (A) runs a line of marrow which tells the fortune of the house. A hole in it means the house-lord's death, and a break means an illness or accident. Breaks and branches from this main line show illness, accident, or death to members of the family. Red spots and patterns in the bone mean blood. Some holes mean graves, others cradles, according to where they are placed. I failed to learn where. The sides (B) of the bone tell public events. When a line belonging to the family forks it means a quarrel in the family.

FIG. 20.—FOWL'S BREAST-BONE FOR SOOTHSAYING

The late Mgr. Cozzy, Apostolic Delegate at Scutari, told me that he had tried hard to learn how to read the bones, and a man who refused to tell him said: "You make black marks on paper and know what they mean; but I do not. God makes marks on bones and you do not know what they mean; but I do."

Such is the belief in bones in Albania that I believe men have died from sheer terror when their death has been read. Thus, an only son—well known to a friend of mine from Djakova—was at a family feast. He picked up a fowl's bone, looked at it, and threw it down with a cry. His father asked what was the matter and the youth said: "In three days you will bury me." His horrified father picked up the bone and saw the reading was only too true. He cried out in grief: "In three days we shall bury thee." His kith and kin wailed on all sides: "In three days we shall bury thee." The poor lad blenched and sickened. He could not eat, gave up hope, and died.

"When he saw in the bones he must die," said the Djakovan, "he died." And with more truth than he was aware of he added: "You

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A 787 would not die because you do not believe it. We believe it; it is true to us."

It is not truth that sways men, but what men believe to be true; and that is a very different thing.

I had many strange examples given me of bone-reading which had come true. It is important that the meat be torn from the bone with the fingers and not touched with a knife.

M 787 The following details about blade-bone-reading are from Montenegro. Bone-reading, I believe, is also practised in Serbia and Bosnia.

The best sheep is a black one with no white hair. The right blade-bone should preferably be used and the meat torn off with the fingers. The joint-socket represents the house, and its depth or shallowness shows if the house will be full of wealth, i.e. harvest and crops. The ridge on the blade shows if the flocks will flourish. Small holes in the blade are cradles. Their position measured from the upper corner of the bone with the last joint of the thumb shows if the births will be within the house or without it, i.e. in the house where the bone is read or in that of a relative. The shapes formed by the marrow, as seen when held against the light, show where fighting will take place and when. A bone with no marks in the centre means a peaceful year. Red marks near the edge mean frontier fighting. Opaque white spots are death within or without the house, according to position. Other marks—I know not which—show banners and victory.

When a man has read the bone and another wishes to do so, it must not be passed from hand to hand, but must be laid down by one man and picked up by the other. Bone-reading in Montenegro is called "gatanje." To read a bone is "gatati." The shoulder-blade is called "lopatitza" (little shovel). Fastened to a stick it is often used to shovel the hearth ashes.

A M 787 *Dreams.*—In Albania and Montenegro, and, I believe, all through the Balkans, there is great belief in dreams. The ladies of the *intelligentsia* in Cetinje had dream-books (Italian) and discussed each other's dreams at length. Dream-books have circulated so much that it is not easy to tell which beliefs are old native ones.

M 787 777 In Montenegro I was told it was lucky to dream of a room full of corn. To dream of a dead man means that it will rain. A girl dreamed that her hair grew right down to the ground. The women told her this meant terrible disgrace would fall on her, and she was so upset that she came a considerable distance to consult me. I reassured her.

A 787 774 In Albania it seemed to be believed by many of the tribesmen that their "hi" (soul or shadow) left them sometimes during sleep and its experiences formed the dream. Dreams were very strongly believed in. One Sunday morning Marko, much perturbed, told me his wife,

Teresi, had dreamed that I should receive bad news from home that day. I laughed and reminded him there was no post till Tuesday. At that moment there was a knock at the gate. The kavass from the British Consulate brought me a note to tell me of the death of King Edward VII. After this it was vain for me to say that dreams foretold nothing. Teresi had dreamed the death of King Edward and the matter was beyond dispute. A 787

The man who looked after my horse dreamed he had seen my sister in the bazaar buying butter and was greatly mystified. No one could explain it, but all were relieved when I had a letter from her saying she was quite well.

An Englishman who travelled in the mountains and was popular was dreamed of. He was seen fording with difficulty a river and hurting his hand as he climbed out. It was decided that he would get safely through a great danger.

It was considered extremely lucky to dream of climbing up a mountain—perhaps because the tribesman places Heaven on a mountain-top. It is lucky to dream of fishing.

7. The Curse

A curse is dreaded still in Balkan lands; it is closely related to a spell. But a spell is accompanied by pagan rites; a curse is without rites—it acts by suggestion. Someone believed to be powerful cries: "May you wither and die!" and you proceed to do so. A curse can be retrospective, and is then considered peculiarly horrible. One of the worst is for a mother to say to her son: "May my milk poison you!' Though he be a grown man she may thus harm him. A 754

A good example is found in the Serb ballad of the *Murderess Mother* (Karadjitch Collection). The mother was wroth with her son, Jovan: "O Jovan, 'tis five years since thy mother gave thee a wife, yet neither boy nor maiden has been born to thee. Someone hath cast a spell on thee; or evil people have wrought wickedness; or has someone cursed you on your marriage? or dost thou not like the maiden? or she like not thee? Something there must be. Kill thy wife, O my son, and I will give thee a better of better stock, who will bear thee offspring!" Jovan refuses with horror, and his mother unbuttoned the coat on her bosom, and tore open her shirt and drew forth both her breasts, crying: "O Jovan, disobedient son! If thou obeyest not thine old mother, may thy mother's milk be leprous to thee, which thou hast sucked from these breasts! Kill thy wife and I will give thee a better." And young Jovan was greatly afeared of his mother's terrible curse, S 754 538 842 593

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SECTION VIII

SOME BALKAN TABOOS. IRON. HAIR

1. Propitiating the Stranger

In a land where magic is still practised it is not surprising to find some ancient taboos still alive. A M 186 784

Of the many things that mankind fears, the unknown is perhaps the most dreaded. Therefore in old days, when travellers were scarce, save on well-marked trade routes, the stranger was an object of great suspicion. Who could tell what evil spells he might work? Magic was then the great danger; to-day it is "politik," the mysterious power of secret diplomacy. The stranger is still suspect in lands much nearer home.

In those parts of the Balkans where the tribal system was still in force, the reluctance of the tribe to admit a stranger was still marked. Off the beaten track a guide was a necessity, not merely to show the way but to act as a passport and explain one. In many places the peasant believed firmly in hidden treasure, and every stranger was suspected of knowing the spell by which to acquire and run off with it. A reason for the stranger's presence is required. A M [787]

Krsto Pejovitch, when I first went up-country with him, began to explain me so soon as we got off the highroad. He was showman, so to speak, and I was the monkey to his organ-grinding. On arrival at a han he would begin loudly: "She can read and write several languages. She can make pictures without a machine [i.e. draw]. She can sing. She can," etc. According to Krsto there were few things I could not do. Moreover, the Montenegrin proverb says: "Long hair, short wits, a woman's head," and as I wore my hair short, an uncommon thing in those days, the simple folk accepted the fact that my wits were necessarily long. Krsto would point this out, and add, in an aside, to bachelors: "She is not married, and God knows how rich." M 186 114 787 M [562]

When I protested, he declared this was the right way to conduct a tour, and he knew all about it. I had come to see real Montenegrin life—and I saw it. But so long as I live I shall feel for the luckless dancing bear who is prodded up to perform once more when dead tired, and remember the days when I could not make a note or a sketch except before a changing crowd as curious as monkeys, which flocked to see a woman who could not only write but write English. As often M 186 114

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with fresh opportunities and new objects. Contrast the uniformity of the magic and ritual of isolated groups, such as the Australians, with the richer material of Negro medicine and the even more elaborate systems of European and Asiatic magic and religion. The process of incorporation can be extended in all directions, and even general theories may be constructed to cover a whole series of practices. *Medressi*-educated Mohammedans, who are often widely read in occult arts and ancient medicine, peasant doctors and seers, occasionally invent or experiment, or think out a logical, all-embracing theory. These individuals are men rather than women. I recall a young Albanian at Peć who was an excellent representative of this type. There was not the least doubt that he was exceedingly intelligent and really studious or even scholarly. He possessed about a hundred fine manuscripts, some of his own copying, and a few printed books, and his chief studies were alchemy and the origin of language. His experiments also included getting into touch with spirits and devils, and finding out new methods of prediction, which he tested experimentally.

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The treatment of disease I described as markedly symptomatic. Diagnosis and cure are seldom combined into a system. When that happens the system or theory then becomes a general standardised method of handling characteristic diseases, the direction being given by one of the more obvious symptoms. The immediateness of approach otherwise is a method of trial and error, that might encourage empirical discovery. This is the only form of the experiment in common use. It is not systematised into experiment under varying conditions to discover the nature of a phenomenon, but it is a practical trial of the means of exploiting it. The process may be repeated when a case understood to be identically the same occurs again. It should be noticed that while quite different diseases may be considered as internal and external forms, for instance, of one and the same disease, the time of day, the age or name of the patient, and so on may alter the notion of what constitutes identical circumstances, or the place where an

782 elders. Even if they are persuaded to swear on the cross, they will not forego the stone, which is the symbol which gives their oath
•787 validity. They are also great believers in omens, and in divination. Men versed in this skill read the future by observing the sternal bones of fowl and the scapulae of sheep. I have witnessed a performance of the latter. The bone has its special divisions, each of which has meaning. On the sheep's scapula the joint socket is the house, and its depth or shallowness indicates whether the house will be empty or full of wealth. This can be used to predict success or failure of crops. The ridge on the blade shows whether or not flocks will multiply. Small holes on the blade are cradles, and the diviner can tell how close to the family, i.e., the "house," the birth will be by the distance from the socket. When you hold the blade up to the firelight or lamp, the shape and position of the marrow will tell where and when there will be fighting. Opaque white spots mean death, and their position indicates whether they will be within or without the household of the enquirer.

182 All of these rituals are concerned with the
788 maintenance of equilibrium in Gheg society. Oaths give authority to agreements, and cannot be broken until a crisis arrives which is stronger than that which the oath-breaking will produce. By clever use of the divining bones, a knowledgeable man can evaluate the state of affairs in his neighborhood, and give warnings; he can also precipitate decisions from wavering allies, for if he is a diviner of reputation, his words will be believed. Very often what he predicts will come true.

Special ritual routines common to members of both official religions restore equilibrium after the crises of birth, marriage, and death. All of these rituals which reinforce their social habits are of much greater importance to the Ghegs than the rites of church or mosque, which are not as well adjusted to this particular form of society. Another such mechanism
671 is traditional law, codified and memorized as the Law of Lek Dukagin, which expresses the mountain attitude toward marriage and the selection of wives, and toward the blood feud. It serves to crystallize forms of behavior and inhibit change in those who are trained from childhood to believe in its infallible authority.

[See cat 116, pp. 37a-b-Anal ysT]